

# Centennial



1876-1976

*Catawba United Methodist Church*  
CATAWBA, N. C. 28609



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A HISTORY OF THE CATAWBA  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

BY

Thomas H. Jones

A special note of gratitude and appreciation should be extended to Miss Lorene Leonard and the memory of Miss Winona Leonard who spent a great deal of time and energy researching the history of our church. Most of the facts concerning our early church have been borrowed from Misses Leonard's earlier history of our church.



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## INTRODUCTION

### I.

The growth of Christian love and fellowship can only be visible through human actions. One of the most notable of all Christian endeavors is the combined cooperation of many persons to establish a church - a place where a person's Christian love and concern for others may be united with the love and concern of other Christians in an effort to nourish the spiritual growth of their community. Since the growth of a church is a cooperative effort among Christian individuals, it is therefore comparable to the growth of an individual.

History is often regarded as something that is past and of no present day value. But the past plays a large role in determining our future. The past is alive and acting in each of our lives at every moment. The history of Christianity keeps alive the Word of God and thereby allows for its growth. Each Christian church throughout history has added its part to the life of Christianity. We at Catawba United Methodist Church can appreciate our church's part in the spreading of Christian fellowship for the past one hundred years. Thanks to the history of our church we are able to continue to grow and function as a sound Christian organization.

It is regrettable that so little information can be obtained on the history of our church. Too few records were kept and too few memories are left for us to recount very many substantial facts related to our church's history. The oldest official records of our church are recorded in the Clapp Book of 1860. Aside from this, there are quarterly conference records available from 1885, and a few scattered minutes of church organizations. It is from these scanty sources and the memories of a few people that I have attempted to put in some interesting and understandable order the history of our Catawba United Methodist Church.



## II.

### EARLY CHURCH HISTORY

From all available evidence, it seems that the original Methodist Church of Catawba was called Smyrna. The church was located about a mile southwest from our present church. This church is reported to have been constructed of logs. The logs were said to have been donated by Caney Lowrance, who was the grandfather of Butler Lowrance, Mrs. Vertie Lowrance Gantt, and Misses Margie and Esther Lowrance. It was also reported that he paid for the carpentry work in gold.

Smyrna was on the Newton Circuit in the South Carolina Conference. There seem to be no records indicating when Smyrna was organized or of its demise. The Clapp Book contains a list of members from 1860-1876. Many notations are beside names describing changes in their membership. It has been speculated that a decline in membership may have prompted members in Catawba to conceive of organizing a new church in Catawba.

## III.

This new church had its beginnings in the Academy, a private school located a short distance to the left of our present church. Minutes from a meeting in 1876 describe the arrangements for the church as progressing. A deed in 1876, by Manual Robinson to J. W. Sigmon, J. U. Long, G. W. Cansler, W. H. Aderholt, C. M. Lowrance, trustees of the church, shows one acre deeded to the church. Another deed was made to the Methodist Church of Catawba in 1879, for one acre from M. F. Cline. James H. Sherrill paid for this land and donated it to the church. Land was acquired later from Mike Rufty and wife Salina for use as a cemetery.

Some memories of a few early church members at Catawba have been revealed. Edger E. Smith, who is presently the oldest living member of our church, used to be the janitor of the first Catawba Church. He swept the floors, fired the stoves, and rang the bell for one dollar per month. When the congregation



wanted to cut his pay, he quit.

Jimmy Sherrill is reported to have been able to end a long Sunday evening sermon while it was in progress. If he thought the message too long, he would pick up his lantern, light it, give a big yawn and then stand up. The minister would usually immediately pronounce the benediction.

Uncle Johnny Sherrill was almost deaf, but he continued to attend church regularly. The reason that he continued his regular attendance was as he put it: "I'm setting an example for the younger generation." We could use more "Uncle Johnnies" today.

Mrs. Henry Pitts was said to have been a very spiritual woman. Once she was asked to lead the prayer during a revival meeting. During the prayer, she became so filled with the Holy Spirit and could not finish the prayer, so she turned to a relative and said, "finish me, Cousin Mattie."



#### IV.

Acquisition of property for the first parsonage for Catawba Circuit involved quite a struggle for funds. At the First Quarterly Conference in 1885, a committee was appointed to secure a lot to build a parsonage at



Catawba. Members of this committee included L. H. Shuford, Lewis Jones, W. H. Morrow, J. H. Sherrill, J. W. Sigmon, and Jacob Wyckoff. A deed for the old church parsonage was made to the trustees by George Cansler and wife Jane. Another deed adding to the parsonage lot was from Jacob D. Little and wife Mary Rufty Little in 1887; and yet another tract of land was added in 1888, from George Cansler and wife Jane, again.



It is reported that our church was completed in 1878 without any outstanding debts. While this may be true, it is apparent from existing conference records that shortly after this time our church began to experience its share of difficulties in securing needed funds.

In 1888 Rev. C. W. Gentry was given permission to receive bids to build the parsonage. Rev. Gentry evidently agreed to invest some of his own money into the building of the parsonage, because at the Second Quarterly Conference in 1892 he served notice to Rev. J. R. Scruggs to pay back money which he had advanced for the building of the parsonage by April 1,



1893, or he would have to take legal action against the Catawba Circuit. A committee was appointed in 1893 to disperse of enough of the Balls Creek Campground property in order to pay the debt to Rev. Gentry, which was about one hundred sixty dollars.

A decision to sell the campground property must have been a drastic step for the church to have taken. Every possible alternative must have been explored since none of the property seems to have been sold. At the Second Quarterly Conference in 1894 the committee reported that the debt to Rev. Gentry had been paid in full, and the committee was dissolved.

V.

Reference is made to the Balls Creek Campground in the earliest conference records. Quarterly Conference meetings were frequently held there. Drastic decision to sell the campground property in order to settle existing debts was made on more than one occasion in the early years of our church. At the First Quarterly Conference in 1889 a motion was passed to sell the campground in order to finance the construction of the parsonage at Catawba. The need for a parsonage was a major reason for acquiring funds, but there were apparently other outstanding debts against the Catawba Circuit.

At the Fourth Quarterly Conference in 1890 this committee reported that it had been offered seven dollars per acre for the campground property. A motion was made to keep the property if the "friends of the campground" could raise three hundred dollars to pay existing claims against the Catawba Circuit. Obviously the money was raised, and the Balls Creek Campgrounds remained as church property.

VI.

From 1876-1885 our church was a part of the Newton Circuit in the South Carolina Conference. Our church was probably served by the Newton pastor



with the assistance of itinerant preachers. In 1885, the Catawba Circuit was organized and was a part of the North Carolina Conference. James Sherrill, L. H. Shuford, and J. U. Long were appointed to settle and adjust claims between the Newton and Catawba Circuits. The first pastor of the Catawba Circuit was Rev. A. M. Lowe. We became a part of the Western North Carolina Conference by the Fourth Quarterly Conference in 1890.

The Catawba Circuit first consisted of five churches. They were Catawba, Bethlehem, Pisgah, Hopewell, and Concord. At this point it may be interesting to point out the financial responsibility shared by each of the five churches in regard to paying the pastor's annual salary.

At a Quarterly Conference in 1888 it was agreed to pay the preacher six hundred twenty-five dollars. The Presiding Elder would be paid seventy-five dollars for a total disbursement of seven hundred dollars. Each church was to contribute a proportionate share of the salaries. The churches were assessed as follows: Catawba, one hundred seventy-five dollars; Concord, one hundred eighty dollars; Hopewell, one hundred fifteen dollars; Bethlehem, one hundred ten dollars; Pisgah, ninety dollars.

In 1890 the circuit added two more churches. They were Center and Setzers Chapel. By 1892 Setzers Chapel had disappeared and Bethel took its place. The church at Bethel ceased to appear in Quarterly Conference records after October, 1892. In 1902 the Catawba Circuit dropped Pisgah, which left the circuit with its four original churches of Catawba, Bethlehem, Concord, and Hopewell plus Center which joined the circuit in 1890. A church named Mountain View joined the circuit in 1907. The Catawba Circuit remained unchanged until 1920 when Center and Mountain View became parts of other newly formed circuits. In 1942, Bethlehem separated from the charge, leaving Catawba, Concord, and Hopewell. Finally in 1954, at the Annual Conference being held at Central Church in Asheville, Catawba became a station or one-church charge.



VII.

The old church structure was remodeled in 1924, by adding Sunday School rooms and columns on the porch and making the front appear more modern by adding new doors and an arch effect over the doors.

Rev. A. C. Kennedy was the pastor during this renovation period.



*Catawba Methodist Church  
Organized 1876.*

A special service for our church structure was held on March 28, 1948.

Rev. A. G. Lackey was the pastor during this time.



Another special service related to the new church was a Dedication Service held on March 20, 1949.



## VIII.

The efforts and energies spent to build the first parsonage have already been mentioned. Rev. C. W. Gentry was the first pastor to live in the first parsonage and Rev. A. G. Lackey was the last. The building of a new parsonage was an equally noteworthy achievement.



At the time of the completion of the new parsonage, the Catawba Charge consisted of Catawba, Concord, and Hopewell Churches. Rev. A. G. Lackey was



the first to reside in the new parsonage. The building committee consisted of the following: W. M. Musgrove, chairman: Henry Elmore, Challie Jones, Seth R. White, G. S. York, McKinley Hildebrand, and Ray Drum. J. P. Coulter served as treasurer of the building fund. The parsonage was officially dedicated on Sunday, April 11, 1954, while the Rev. A. W. Lynch was pastor.

Our church has continued to take a lot of pride in our parsonage. In 1964, new carpets were put in the living room, dining room, and hall. In 1968, the kitchen was remodeled, by having a serving bar removed and new cabinets and floor covering installed. In 1971, the parsonage committee had new furniture put in five rooms and added carpets in the master bedroom and pastor's study. Wall paper was put in the master bedroom, bath, and kitchen in 1975.

## IX.

The Women's Society of Christian Service was organized September 30, 1940. There were forty charter members. Mrs. John Troutman was the first president and the pastor at this time was the Rev. W. G. Grigg.

Mrs. Annie Rhyne Sherrill was a local school teacher, and a devout church worker and Sunday School teacher. A Sunday School class named in her honor was formed in 1924.

Rev. Beverly Wilson was the only pastor who ever served our church, was moved, then sent back for another four year term. He had the largest family of any pastor, and left four of his thirteen children in Catawba. Ira married Dee Nichols, and Louise married Reggie Nichols. Catherine is deceased, but Ira, Laura, and Louise are still all active members of our church.

We are told by some of our present members that Mr. J.U. Long was Sunday School superintendant for forty years.



Our church has always been known for its cooperation with other denominations. For example, our church building was used for worship services by the Redeemer Lutheran congregation before their present structure was built.

The Methodists and Baptists have always had a good relationship with one another. We understand that prior to 1923, when a Sunday School was organized at Catawba Baptist Church, their young people came to the Methodist Sunday School. Miss Edna Danner, a Baptist, taught in the Methodist Sunday School. Miss Winona Leonard, one of our members, was also a Sunday School teacher during this period. For a number of years, joint Thanksgiving and Easter services are observed by both our churches.

X.

The first Homecoming for our church occurred on September 27, 1933, during the pastorship of Rev. E. D. Ballard. The next Homecoming occurred on August 30, 1959. Rev. M. C. Ellerbe was the pastor then.

Homecoming for our church has been a very special event for the people of our church. But this year's Homecoming will be all the more important and special to us since we will be celebrating one hundred years of Christian growth in our Catawba United Methodist Church.



PASTORS OF CATAWBA METHODIST CHURCH

Reverend Wesley M. Bagley	1873 - 1876
Reverend J. C. Hartsell	1877
Reverend C. M. Anderson	1878 - 1879
Reverend P. H. W. Stamey	1880 - 1882
Reverend E. L. Stamey	1882 - 1883
Reverend J. W. Ivey	1883 - 1884
Reverend A. M. Lowe	1884
Reverend M. V. Sherrill	1885 - 1887
Reverend C. M. Gentry	1888 - 1891
Reverend J. M. Downum	1892 - 1893
Reverend J. S. Nelson	1894
Reverend J. H. England	1895 - 1896
Reverend C. C. Brothers	1897 - 1898
Reverend J. D. Buie	1899
Reverend J. W. Bowman	1900 - 1901
Reverend R. S. Howie	1902 - 1905
Reverend Ebenezer Meyers	1906 - 1907
Reverend J. M. Price	1907 - 1910
Reverend Beverly Wilson	1911 - 1914
Reverend A. G. Loftin	1915 - 1918
Reverend J. F. Ratledge	1919 - 1921
Reverend A. C. Kennedy	1922 - 1925
Reverend Beverly Wilson	1926 - 1929
Reverend E. D. Ballard	1930 - 1932
Reverend G. W. Clay	1933 - 1936
Reverend Reid Wall	1937 - 1938
Reverend W. Q. Grigg	1939 - 1941
Reverend A. G. Lackey	1942 - 1951
Reverend A. W. Lynch	1951 - 1955
Reverend Marvin Boggs	1955 - 1958
Reverend M. C. Ellerbe	1958 - 1962
Reverend John C. Vernon	1963 - 1965
Reverend Charles E. Bruce	1966 - 1970
Reverend R. J. Starling	1971 - 1974
Reverend Clegg W. Avett	1975



CATAWBA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

May 10, 1976

Allen, Donald James  
Allen, Mrs. Donald J. (Sue Carolyn Setzer)  
Allen, Robert James  
Allen, Mrs. Robert J. (Mildred Queen)  
Allen, Stanley Q.  
Arndt, Mrs. David (Teresa Long)  
Arndt, Gary Lee  
Arndt, Willis  
Arndt, Mrs. Willis (Hazel Queen)  
Arndt, David Willis  
Avett, Mrs. Clegg W. (Martha)  
Black, Dana Howard  
Black, Dwight Allen  
Black, Jackie Marlyn  
Black, Robin Ruth  
Boggs, Mrs. Frances Sherrill  
Boggs, Robert Lee, Jr. (Bobby)  
Boggs, Mrs. Robert Lee Jr. (Judy Carpenter)  
Boggs, Gina Robin  
Boggs, Robert Lee, III  
Booth, Hubert  
Boyles, Mrs. Betty Ann Spencer  
Brown, Mrs. Deborah Rufty  
Brown, Guy H.  
Brown, Mrs. Vivian Stewart  
Brown, James Davis  
Brown, Ronald Tate  
Browning, Mrs. Patricia McGuinn  
Cagle, Mrs. Mary K.  
Campbell, Elbert  
Campbell, Mrs. Elbert (Helen Eades)  
Campbell, Gregory Scott  
Childers, Lewis  
Childers, Mrs. Lewis ( Nellie McGuinn)  
Childers, Darrell Lee  
Childers, Deborah Joann  
Childers, Randy Michael  
Childers, Vicky Lynn  
Coffey, Dianne Sipe  
Connor, Mrs. Margaret L.  
Cook, Charlie  
Cook, Mrs. Garland (Dixie Rufty)  
Coulter, Mrs. Zella Hollar  
Cromer, Mrs. Louise Little  
Deal, Mrs. Ruth  
Drum, Charles M.  
Drum, Mrs. Charles M. (Georgia Ruth Brown)  
Drum, David Wayne  
Drum, Mrs. David Wayne (Susan Monroe)  
Duncan, Mrs. Ruby  
Elmore, Edgar L.  
Elmore, Mrs. Edgar (Bessie Miller)



Elmore, Mrs. Garland (Katherine)  
Elmore, Guy  
Elmore, Mrs. Guy (Loretta Setzer)  
Elmore, Dwight Guy  
Elmore, Mrs. Dwight (Mary Alice)  
Elmore, John Henry  
Elmore, Mrs. John Henry ( Grace Miller)  
Elmore, John Henry, Jr.  
Elmore, Mrs. John Henry, Jr. (Judy Setzer)  
Elmore, Ted  
Elmore, Thurmond  
Epps, Michael Douglas  
Epps, Mrs. Michael Douglas (Debbie)  
Everhardt, Mrs. Sherry Gantt  
Frye, Grady V.  
Gantt, Charlie  
Gantt, Mrs. Charlie (Vergie Lowrance)  
Gantt, Kenneth  
Gantt, Mrs. Kenneth (Annie Lou Martin)  
Gantt, Kay  
Gantt, Samuel  
Gantt, Mrs. Samuel (Helen Murray)  
Gantt, Ronald Eugene  
Garrison, Tony  
Garrison, Mrs. Tony (Margaret Connor)  
Gilleland, Aleda  
Glovier, Mrs. Zula Sherrill  
Glovier, Glenn, Jr.  
Glovier, Mrs. Glenn, Jr. (Zelda Kale)  
Glovier, Cynthia Louise  
Glovier, Teresa Lynn  
Glovier, Walter Lee  
Greene, Donald  
Greene, Mrs. Donald (Betty Buchanan)  
Haivala, Mrs. Nancy Sigmon  
Henry, Charles  
Henry, Mrs. Charles (Jeanette Troutman)  
Hoke, Mrs. Lois Rowe  
Huffman, Garland  
Huffman, Mrs. Garland (Kathleen Eades)  
Huffman, Mrs. Lena Kale  
Huffman, Mrs. Nancy Moose  
Jackson, Robert, Jr.  
Jackson, Mrs. Robert, Jr. (Joann Musgrove)  
Jackson, Mark  
Jackson, Kristina  
Johnson, Mrs. Bertha  
Jones, Mrs. Ruby Robinson  
Jones, Thomas A.  
Jones, Mrs. Thomas A. (Patricia Arndt)  
Jones, Regina Gayle  
Jones, Thomas H.  
Jones, Mrs. Thomas H. (Betty McRee)  
Jones, William Q.  
Jones, Mrs. William Q. (Thelma Wilkinson)  
Keever, Michael Lee  
Keller, T. W.  
Keller, Mrs. T. W.



Leonard, C. T.  
Leonard, Mrs. C. T. (Genevieve Gaither)  
Leoanrd, Mrs. Phillip (Eva)  
Leonard, David Ray  
Leonard, Mark Allen  
Lessnau, Mrs. Edward (Shirley Sigmon)  
Little, Charlie  
Little, Evelyn  
Loftin, Mrs. Lee (Bertha Kale)  
Long, Corrine  
Long, Lonnie  
Long, Mrs. Lonnie (Mary Ann)  
Long, Larry  
Long, Mark  
Long, Susan  
Love, J. Ernest  
Love, Mrs. J. Ernest (Lois Dellinger)  
Lowrance, Aileen  
Lowrance, Carlos U.  
Lowrance, Allen  
Lowrance, James  
Lowrance, Mrs. James (Ann)  
Lowrance, Mrs. Ira Wilson  
Lowrance, Margie  
Lowrance, Robert Wayne  
Lowrance, Vernon L.  
Lowrance, Mrs. Billy Elmore  
Lynch, Allen  
Lynch, Mrs. Allen (Barbara Rufty)  
Mace, Lillie Spencer  
Martin, Glenn  
Martin, Mrs. Glenn (Doris Robinson)  
Martin, Angela  
Martin, Terry  
Martin, Tony  
Martin, Mrs. Willie (Elmer Hildebrand)  
Moore, Mrs. Gail Coulter  
Moore Mrs. Carl (Marie Rufty)  
Moose, Ricky Jason  
Morrow, Mrs. Mike (Janice Sharpe)  
Mundy, Katrina Diana Yount  
Murray, George  
Murray, Mrs. George (Ruby)  
Murray, Phillip  
Musgrove, Mrs. William (Christine R.)  
Musgrove, Virginia  
McCoy, Mrs. Pauline W.  
McGuinn, James Herbert  
McGuinn, Mrs. James Herbert (Nellie)  
Nichols, Mrs. Laura Wilson  
Nichols, Reggie  
Nichols, Mrs. Reggie (Louise Wilson)  
Pearson, Vicky Connell  
Pope, Fred  
Pope, Mrs. Fred (Dolly Korn)  
Pope, Freddy  
Pope, George Linden



Raymer, Mrs. Maude Smith  
Rhyne, William L.  
Rhyne, Mrs. William L. (Helen Marlowe)  
Rhyne, John Whitener  
Robinson, Miss Annie  
Robinson, Miss Bertie  
Robinson, Junius V.  
Robinson, Mrs. Flake (Marie Loftin)  
Robinson, William Flake (Bill)  
Robinson, Mrs. William Flake (Sylvia Beal)  
Robinson, Janet Lea  
Robinson, William Todd  
Robinson, Mrs. Lee (Bessie)  
Robinson, Ray Pitts  
Robinson, Mrs. Ray Pitts (Mabel Elmore)  
Robinson, Janice Darlene  
Rowe, Neil  
Rowe, Mrs. Neil (Irene)  
Rufty, Mrs. J. D. (Marceline Price)  
Rufty, John Thomas  
Rufty, Mrs. John Thomas (Connie)  
Rufty, John  
Rufty, Mrs. John (Faye Elmore)  
Rufty, Keith Anderson  
Rufty, Mike  
Rufty, Mrs. Mike (Jean Millholland)  
Rufty, Walton  
Setzer, Mrs. Fannie Mae Lowrance  
Sharpe, Jerry  
Sharpe, Mrs. Jerry (Maria)  
Sharpe, Connie Denise  
Sharpe, Robin  
Sharpe, Scottie  
Sharpe, Haskel  
Sharpe, Mrs. Haskel (Rachel Murray)  
Sharpe, Freddy F.  
Sharpe, Mrs. Freddy F. (Carol Nuzum)  
Sharpe, Timothy  
Sharpe, J. Frank, Jr.  
Sharpe, Mrs. J. Frank (Peggy Shook)  
Sherrill, Jack  
Sherrill, Mrs. Jack (Ina Mae Travis)  
Sherrill, Larry M.  
Sigmon, Bennett M.  
Sigmon, Claude M.  
Sigmon, Mrs. Clyde (Maggie Brown)  
Sigmon, Geraldine  
Sigmon, J. C.  
Sipe, David  
Sipe, Mrs. David (Virginia Elmore)  
Sipe, Randy Dean  
Smith, Edgar E.  
Smith, W. Eugene  
Smith, Mrs. W. Eugene (Nellie Moretz)  
Smith, Joseph Fred, Sr.  
Smith, Joseph Fred, Jr.  
Smith, Mrs. Glenda Glovier  
Smith, Mrs. Margaret Arndt



Spencer, Mrs. Ollie Cline  
Spencer, Joe P.  
Spencer, Mrs. Joe P. (Mary Caroline Love)  
Spencer, Susan  
Spencer, Amanda  
Spencer, Joe P. Jr. (Phillip)  
Spencer, Mrs. Joe P. Jr. (Judy Shook)  
Spencer, Mrs. Earl (Virginia Moore)  
Spencer, Steve  
Stewart, Everett Franklin  
Stewart, Mrs. Everette (Hazel White)  
Stewart, Dawn Michaele  
Stewart, Gary Franklin  
Stewart, James H.  
Stewart, Mrs. James H. (Chene Clapp)  
Travis, Mrs. Betty Elmore  
Travis, Fred  
Travis, Mrs. Fred (Hilda)  
Travis, Raymond Lewis, Sr.  
Travis, Mrs. Raymond Lewis, Sr. (Shirley Elmore)  
Travis, Raymond Lewis, Jr.  
Travis, Tommy  
Travis, Mrs. Tommy (Tinette Campbell)  
Travis, William Leroy  
Travis, Mrs. William Leroy (Betty Whitener)  
Travis, Jane Lee  
Travis, Richard L.  
Travis, Mrs. Richard L. (Beatrice)  
Troutman, Mrs. John (Annie Witherspoon)  
Wehunt, Mrs. Kenneth (Sarah Booth)  
Wilkinson, Miss Helen  
Wike, Clifton A.  
Wike, Mrs. Clifton A. (Deborah Carriger)  
Young, McCoy  
Young, Mrs. McCoy  
Yount, Eddie Lee  
Yount, Robert  
Yount, Wynell Bridges  
Yount, Brian Keith





